

Rules of the Game

Enchantments (Part Two)

By Skip Williams



Last week we delved into **enchantment** basics. This week, we'll examine a few enchantments that are representative of the school and consider how they work in play.

Charms

As noted in Part One, charm **spells** grant the caster some degree of control over the subject. **Charms** tend to be the most troublesome enchantments because arguments arise over the extent of the control the spell provides, especially when a player character falls victim to a charm spell. Fortunately, a quick review of the spell description usually proves sufficient to establish what the spell can do.

When a **player character** falls victim to a charm and the player finds it hard to cooperate to the extent that the spell requires, it's usually best for the **DM** to point out a course of action for the character that properly reflects the enchantment. If the player continues to balk, the DM should step in and treat the character as an NPC for a short time.

From page 72 of the *Player's Handbook*:

INFLUENCING NPC ATTITUDES

Use the table below to determine the effectiveness of Diplomacy checks (or Charisma checks) made to influence the attitude of a nonplayer character, or wild empathy checks made to influence the attitude of an animal or magical beast. The *Dungeon Master's Guide* has more information on NPC attitudes.

Initial	New Attitude (DC to achieve)				
Attitude	Hostile	Unfriendly	Indifferent	Friendly	Helpful
Hostile	Less than 20	20	25	35	50
Unfriendly	Less than 5	5	15	25	40
Indifferent	--	Less than 1	1	15	30
Friendly	--	--	Less than 1	1	20
Helpful	--	--	--	Less than 1	1

For example, if a character encounters a nonplayer character whose initial attitude is hostile, that character needs to get a result of 20 or higher on a Diplomacy check (or Charisma check) to change that NPC's attitude. On any result less than 20, the NPC's attitude is unchanged. On a result of 20 to 24, the NPC's attitude improves to unfriendly.

Attitude	Means	Possible Actions
Hostile	Will take risks to hurt you	Attack, interfere, berate, flee
Unfriendly	Wishes you ill	Mislead, gossip, avoid, watch suspiciously, insult
Indifferent	Doesn't much care	Socially expected interaction
Friendly	Wishes you well	Chat, advise, offer limited help, advocate
Helpful	Will take risks to help you	Protect, back up, heal, aid

Charm Person: The quintessential charm spell, *charm person* makes the target **creature** friendly to the caster. According to the sidebar on page 72 of the *Player's Handbook*, a friendly creature wishes you well and will chat with you, advise you, offer you limited help, and act as your advocate.

In general, a *charmed* (or otherwise friendly) person might be expected to be roughly as accommodating to you as a co-worker that trusts you and gets along well with you or as obliging as an old school chum. You shouldn't expect a *charmed* character to make any truly painful or costly sacrifices for you.

You have a limited ability to persuade a *charmed* creature to go out on a limb for you when the consequences to the *charmed* creature aren't immediately obvious. The spell description uses holding off a red dragon while you escape as an example (and that works only when the *charmed* subject is a fighter type with appropriate equipment). For more suggestions on handling charms, see *Save My Game: [Adjudicating Charm Spells](#)*

From page 209 of the *Player's Handbook*:

Charm Person

Enchantment (Charm) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Brd 1, Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One humanoid creature

Duration: 1 hour/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This charm makes a humanoid creature regard you as its trusted friend and ally (treat the target's attitude as friendly; see *Influencing NPC Attitudes*, page 72). If the creature is currently being threatened or attacked by you or your allies, however, it receives a +5 bonus on its saving throw.

The spell does not enable you to control the *charmed* person as if it were an automaton, but it perceives your words and actions in the most favorable way. You can try to give the subject orders, but you must win an opposed Charisma check to convince it to do anything it wouldn't ordinarily do. (Retries are not allowed.) An affected creature never obeys suicidal or obviously harmful orders, but a *charmed* fighter, for example, might believe you if you assured him that the only chance to save your life is for him to hold back an onrushing red dragon for "just a few seconds." Any act by you or your apparent allies that

threatens the *charmed* person breaks the spell. You must speak the person's language to communicate your commands, or else be good at pantomiming.

In any case, when you give a *charmed* subject orders (rather than just take advantage of its friendly attitude), you must win an opposed **Charisma** check against the creature to persuade it obey. Giving an order usually is a **free action** for you, and making the opposed check is part of that free action. If your subject also is under another creature's mental control, you first must make an opposed check against the subject to make it obey you, then you must make a separate check against the other controlling character. The extra check isn't an action for you.

From page 144 of the *Player's Handbook*:

Speak

In general, speaking is a free action that you can perform even when it isn't your turn. Some DMs may rule that a character can only speak on his turn, or that a character can't speak while flatfooted (and thus can't warn allies of a surprise threat until he has a chance to act). Speaking more than few sentences is generally beyond the limit of a free action; to communicate more information than that, your DM may require that you take a move action or even a full-round action.

Charm person isn't a language-dependent spell, but it isn't much good to you if you don't have some way to communicate with the subject. Speaking in a language that the subject can understand allows you to make the best possible use of a *charm person* spell. You can use pantomime to communicate with a subject; however, gestures won't allow you much in the way of detailed communication with a subject, but you can convey simple things such as "come," "go," "pick that up," or "open that." When in doubt, the DM might call for an Intelligence check to decide if the subject can understand the gestures. For something fairly simple, such as "come" or "go," a DC of 10 is sufficient. For something more complex, such as "pick that up" or "open that," the DC is 15. Concepts that merit a higher DC probably are too complex to communicate through gestures that you make up on the spot. As always, adjust the DC upward for unfavorable conditions, such as poor visibility, a particularly obtuse subject, or any situation that makes the gestures hard to understand, such as an overabundance of things that your gestures might indicate.

If the creature you target with a *charm person* spell is currently under attack by you or your allies, or under the threat of attack, the subject gets a +5 **bonus** on its **saving throw**. See page 171 in the *Player's Handbook* for a definition of attack as it pertains to spells. The DM must decide if the subject is under the threat of attack; this usually requires nothing more than a common sense judgment about what you and your allies are doing. If the subject can reasonably assume that you or your group will attack, it is under threat. For example, you and your group threaten attack if you've already attacked the subject's allies, when you menace the subject with weapons or spells, or when you've invaded some building or territory where you don't belong.

From Special Spell Effects on page 171 of the *Player's Handbook*:

Attacks: Some spell descriptions refer to attacking. For instance, *invisibility* is dispelled if you attack anyone or anything while under its effects. All offensive combat actions, even those that don't damage opponents (such as disarm and bull rush) are considered attacks. Attempts to turn or rebuke undead count as attacks. All spells that opponents resist with saving throws, that deal damage, or that otherwise harm or hamper subjects are attacks. *Summon monster I* and similar spells are not attacks because the spells themselves don't harm anyone.

Charm person affects only humanoids. Many other spells work just like the *charm person* spell, except that they affect other kinds of creatures. These spells include *charm animal* (affects only creatures of the animal type), *charm monster* (affects creatures of all types, though not creatures immune to mind-affecting spells), *mass charm monster* (just like *charm monster*, but multiple creatures), and *symbol of persuasion*.

Enthrall: This spell makes other creatures pay attention exclusively to you. The creatures must be able to see you and hear you speak or sing for a full round in a language they can understand (*enthrall* is language-dependent, see Part One). Though the spell description speaks of an area, *enthrall* is a targeted spell and you can select any number of creatures within range as targets for the spell. If any creature comes within range after you cast the spell, you can target it, too.

From page 227 of the *Player's Handbook*:**Enthrall**

Enchantment (Charm) [Language Dependent, Mind-Affecting, Sonic]

Level: Brd 2, Clr 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Targets: Any number of creatures

Duration: 1 hour or less

Saving Throw: Will negates; see text

Spell Resistance: Yes

If you have the attention of a group of creatures, you can use this spell to hold them spellbound. To cast the spell, you must speak or sing without interruption for 1 full round. Thereafter, those affected give you their undivided attention, ignoring their surroundings. They are considered to have an attitude of friendly while under the effect of the spell (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for information about NPC attitudes). Any potentially affected creature of a race or religion unfriendly to yours gets a +4 bonus on the saving throw.

A creature with 4 or more HD or with a Wisdom score of 16 or higher remains aware of its surroundings and has an attitude of indifferent. It gains a new saving throw if it witnesses actions that it opposes.

The effect lasts as long as you speak or sing, to a maximum of 1 hour. Those *enthralled* by your words take no action while you speak or sing and for 1d3 rounds thereafter while they discuss the topic or

performance. Those entering the area during the performance must also successfully save or become *enthralled*. The speech ends (but the 1d3-round delay still applies) if you lose concentration or do anything other than speak or sing.

If those not *enthralled* have unfriendly or hostile attitudes toward you, they can collectively make a Charisma check to try to end the spell by jeering and heckling. For this check, use the Charisma bonus of the creature with the highest Charisma in the group; others may make Charisma checks to assist (as described in Aid Another, page 65). The heckling ends the spell if this check result beats your Charisma check result. Only one such challenge is allowed per use of the spell.

If any member of the audience is attacked or subjected to some other overtly hostile act, the spell ends and the previously *enthralled* members become immediately unfriendly toward you. Each creature with 4 or more HD or with a Wisdom score of 16 or higher becomes hostile.

Once the spell takes affect on a target, that creature does nothing but stand quietly and pay attention to you. It looks at you and listens to you. The spell lasts for as long as you speak or sing and for 1d3 rounds after you stop speaking or singing (but see below), up to a maximum of 1 hour.

If any member of the audience is attacked or subjected to some other overtly hostile act, the spell ends immediately (no 1d3 rounds of additional effects occur), and the enchanted creatures become unfriendly or hostile to you, as noted in the spell description. Any attack or hostile action ends the spell, not just acts from you or your allies. The spell description doesn't say so, but if some third party ends the spell by attacking your audience, it's a good bet that the party who disrupted the spell also draws the audience's wrath.

Compulsions

Most **compulsion** spells literally force the subject to act in some manner, or not act at all. Many compulsions simply make their subjects feel particularly good (or bad) and provide bonuses (or penalties) when the subjects take certain actions. The *bless*, *good hope*, *bane*, and *crushing despair* spells are examples of the latter type of spell.

Many compulsions grant the caster some degree of control over the subject, however, and require the same careful handling as charm spells. Here are a few examples:

Animal Messenger: This spell affects one **Tiny** creature of the **animal type**.

From page 198 of the *Player's Handbook*:**Animal Messenger**

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Brd 2, Drd 2, Rgr 1**Components:** V, S, M**Casting Time:** 1 standard action**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)**Target:** One Tiny animal**Duration:** One day/level**Saving Throw:** None; see text**Spell Resistance:** Yes

You compel a Tiny animal to go to a spot you designate. The most common use for this spell is to get an animal to carry a message to your allies. The animal cannot be one tamed or trained by someone else, including such creatures as familiars and animal companions.

Using some type of food desirable to the animal as a lure, you call the animal to you. It advances and awaits your bidding. You can mentally impress on the animal a certain place well known to you or an obvious landmark (such as the peak of a distant mountain). The directions must be simple, because the animal depends on your knowledge and can't find a destination on its own. You can attach some small item or note to the messenger. The animal then goes to the designated location and waits there until the duration of the spell expires, whereupon it resumes its normal activities.

During this period of waiting, the messenger allows others to approach it and remove any scroll or token it carries. Unless the intended recipient of a message is expecting a messenger in the form of a bird or other small animal, the carrier may be ignored. The intended recipient gains no special ability to communicate with the animal or read any attached message (if it's written in a language he or she doesn't know, for example).

Material Component: A morsel of food the animal likes.

The target animal cannot be one tamed or trained by someone else. This includes familiars (which are magical beasts and not subject to the spell anyway) and animal companions. It also includes any animal that has been taught tricks or trained for a purpose with the Handle Animal skill.

The spell gives you the power to impress upon the animal a set of directions to some location you specify, and the animal will carry a message to that location for you. You can attach the message or item to the animal somehow (such as with a collar or leg band) or have the animal carry it in its mouth or a manipulative appendage (if the animal has one). You must know the route to that location yourself and the directions you give must be fairly simple. The spell description doesn't define "simple" in the context of the spell, but I recommend something based on obvious landmarks and a minimal number of landmark-based steps, say three steps per point of **Intelligence** the animal has. Such directions might include "go to the top of that hill" (This would require the hill to be in sight and you would have to point at the hill.) Other possibilities would include walk a half mile in that direction (you point in the direction), follow the left bank to the rapids, walk into the woods, and wait by the

lightning-struck oak.

You cannot communicate with the target animal in any way other than to direct it to the location you desire. When the animal reaches the location you specified, it waits there for the remaining duration of the spell. The spell doesn't give creatures at the location any special ability to communicate with the animal or any special ability to read or decipher any message the animal might carry for you.

Animal Trance: This spell affects 2d6 **Hit Dice** worth of animals or **magical beasts** with Intelligence scores of 1 or 2. Roll the dice to determine how many Hit Dice worth of creatures, then select targets for the spell. If you select more targets than the roll allows, the targets closest to you are affected first. If you select a target that the spell can't affect (because it is not an animal or magical beast or because it has an Intelligence higher than 2), that creature doesn't count against the number of Hit Dice the spell can affect.

From page 198 of the *Player's Handbook*:

Animal Trance

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting, Sonic]

Level: Brd 2, Drd 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Targets: Animals or magical beasts with Intelligence 1 or 2

Duration: Concentration

Saving Throw: Will negates; see text

Spell Resistance: Yes

Your swaying motions and music (or singing, or chanting) compel animals and magical beasts to do nothing but watch you. Only a creature with an Intelligence score of 1 or 2 can be fascinated by this spell. Roll 2d6 to determine the total number of HD worth of creatures that you fascinate. The closest targets are selected first until no more targets within range can be affected. For example, if Vadania affects 7 HD worth of animals and there are several 2 HD wolves within close range, only the three closest wolves are affected.

A magical beast, a dire animal, or an animal trained to attack or guard is allowed a saving throw; an animal not trained to attack or guard is not.

A creature affected by this spell becomes fascinated with you. It takes no actions other than to pay attention to you. It takes a -4 penalty on skill checks made as reactions, such as Listen and Spot checks. Any potential threat, such as a hostile creature approaching, allows the creature a new saving throw against the spell; however, only a dire animal or an animal trained to attack or guard (see the Handle Animal skill description) is allowed a saving throw against the spell. Any obvious threat, such as someone drawing a weapon, casting a spell, or aiming a ranged weapon at the fascinated creature, automatically breaks the spell, even when a subject is not allowed a saving throw.

Command: You use this spell to issue a single order to one living creature. You must give the order in a

language the subject can understand (*command* is language-dependent; see Part One). The spell provides a short list of orders you can use. When affected by this spell, a creature must obey its order to the best of its ability and at the soonest possible moment, usually during its next turn after receiving the spell. The subject generally obeys you for 1 round. See the spell description for details.

From page 211 of the *Player's Handbook*:

Command

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Language-Dependent, Mind-Affecting]

Level: Clr 1

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One living creature

Duration: 1 round

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

You give the subject a single command, which it obeys to the best of its ability at its earliest opportunity. You may select from the following options.

Approach: On its turn, the subject moves toward you as quickly and directly as possible for 1 round. The creature may do nothing but move during its turn, and it provokes attacks of opportunity for this movement as normal.

Drop: On its turn, the subject drops whatever it is holding. It can't pick up any dropped item until its next turn.

Fall: On its turn, the subject falls to the ground and remains prone for 1 round. It may act normally while prone but takes any appropriate penalties.

Flee: On its turn, the subject moves away from you as quickly as possible for 1 round. It may do nothing but move during its turn, and it provokes attacks of opportunity for this movement as normal.

Halt: The subject stands in place for 1 round. It may not take any actions but is not considered helpless.

If the subject can't carry out your command on its next turn, the spell automatically fails.

The *greater command* spell functions just like the *command* spell, except that you command multiple creatures and the creatures you command might obey you for multiple rounds. You must give the same command to each creature. An affected creature obeys you for at least 1 round if it fails its initial save. Each round thereafter, at the start of its turn, the creature gets a new saving throw to end the effect. A successful save from one creature doesn't affect any other creatures you have targeted with the spell.

Suggestion: Here's a potent spell that often provokes arguments. Using *suggestion*, you can compel a subject to undertake some activity that you can describe briefly. The spell description says you must be able to describe the activity in a sentence or two. I recommend that you limit *suggestions* to two fairly simple sentences of no more than 25 to 30 words total.

From page 285 of the *Player's Handbook*:

Suggestion

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Language-Dependent, Mind-Affecting]

Level: Brd 2, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One living creature

Duration: 1 hour/level or until completed

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

You influence the actions of the target creature by suggesting a course of activity (limited to a sentence or two). The *suggestion* must be worded in such a manner as to make the activity sound reasonable. Asking the creature to stab itself, throw itself onto a spear, immolate itself, or do some other obviously harmful act automatically negates the effect of the spell. However, a *suggestion* that a pool of acid is actually pure water and that a quick dip would be refreshing is another matter. Urging a red dragon to stop attacking your party so that the dragon and party could jointly loot a rich treasure elsewhere is likewise a reasonable use of the spell's power.

The suggested course of activity can continue for the entire duration, such as in the case of the red dragon mentioned above. If the suggested activity can be completed in a shorter time, the spell ends when the subject finishes what it was asked to do. You can instead specify conditions that will trigger a special activity during the duration. For example, you might suggest that a noble knight give her warhorse to the first beggar she meets. If the condition is not met before the spell duration expires, the activity is not performed.

A very reasonable *suggestion* causes the save to be made with a penalty (such as -1 or -2) at the discretion of the DM.

Material Component: A snake's tongue and either a bit of honeycomb or a drop of sweet oil.

Suggestion is language-dependent, so you must speak to the subject in a language it can understand (but see Part One).

You can't use the spell to compel a subject to do something suicidal or obviously harmful. The course of action you suggest must seem reasonable. The DM is the final judge of what's reasonable, but as a rule of thumb a *suggestion* should be something that the subject might decide to do on his own if the circumstances were appropriate or if the subject shared the caster's point of view. You can word a *suggestion* so as to make the

requested activity seem reasonable. The spell description uses an example in which the caster suggests that a pool of acid is pure water and suggests a swim therein.

Very reasonable *suggestions* impose a penalty on the saving throw. The DM must decide what is very reasonable, but in general, these are things that the subject might do without any special prompting from anyone else. A *suggestion* to flee from a fight and get as far away as possible would be very reasonable, especially if the subject was already facing defeat (or the subject has a credible expectation of defeat).

A *suggestion* effect ends when the subject follows the course of action the caster specifies. You should be careful to word *suggestions* so that they can't be fulfilled in a round or two. For example, a *suggestion* to "flee" or "hide" can be completed pretty quickly, and nothing in those *suggestions* prevents the subject from rejoining a battle immediately afterward.

The spell also allows you to specify some action that the subject must take in response to a trigger you specify. The triggered action can't be anything you couldn't normally do with the spell. For example, you can't use *suggestion* to order someone to kill himself at sundown. When describing a trigger, you must fit the description into the two fairly simple sentences of no more than 25 to 30 words total that the spell allows you.

Many spells and effects in the **D&D** game allow you to make *suggestions*, including the **bard's** fascinate class feature (when the bard is 6th level or higher), and the *demand*, *guards and wards*, and *illusory script* spells. The *mass suggestion* spell works just like *suggestion* except that it affects more than one creature. You must give the same *suggestion* to each subject you affect with a single spell.

Dominate Person: This spell functions much like a supercharged version of the *charm person* spell. The spell is not language-dependent and it provides you with a telepathic link with the subject. The link allows you to control the subject from afar (even when you can't see the subject; see the spell description) and to know what the subject is experiencing, as noted in the spell description.

From page 224 of the *Player's Handbook*:

Dominate Person

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Brd 4, Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One humanoid

Duration: One day/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

You can control the actions of any humanoid creature through a telepathic link that you establish with the subject's mind. If you and the subject have a common language, you can generally force the subject to perform as you desire, within the limits of its abilities. If no common language exists, you can communicate only basic commands, such as "Come here," "Go there," "Fight," and "Stand still." You know what the subject is experiencing, but you do not receive direct sensory input from it, nor can it communicate with you telepathically.

Once you have given a *dominated* creature a command, it continues to attempt to carry out that command to the exclusion of all other activities except those necessary for day-to-day survival (such as sleeping, eating, and so forth). Because of this limited range of activity, a Sense Motive check against DC 15 (rather than DC 25) can determine that the subject's behavior is being influenced by an enchantment effect (see the Sense Motive skill description, page 81).

Changing your instructions or giving a *dominated* creature a new command is the equivalent of redirecting a spell, so it is a move action.

By concentrating fully on the spell (a standard action), you can receive full sensory input as interpreted by the mind of the subject, though it still can't communicate with you. You can't actually see through the subject's eyes, so it's not as good as being there yourself, but you still get a good idea of what's going on (the subject is walking through a smelly courtyard, the subject is talking to a guard, the guard looks suspicious, and so forth).

Subjects resist this control, and any subject forced to take actions against its nature receives a new saving throw with a +2 bonus. Obviously self-destructive orders are not carried out. Once control is established, the range at which it can be exercised is unlimited, as long as you and the subject are on the same plane. You need not see the subject to control it. If you don't spend at least 1 round concentrating on the spell each day, the subject receives a new saving throw to throw off the domination.

Protection from evil or a similar spell can prevent you from exercising control or using the telepathic link while the subject is so warded, but such an effect neither prevents the establishment of domination nor dispels it.

If you don't share a common language with the subject, you can give her only simple commands, such as "Come here," "Go there," "Fight," and "Stand still." If you and the subject share a common language, you can compel the subject to do just about anything you want. You can't force a subject to do anything obviously self-destructive, but just about anything else goes. If you try to force the subject to act against its nature, it gets a new saving throw with a +2 bonus, and a successful saving throw ends the spell. (It pays to be careful about what you order a dominated subject to do.) The DM must decide what's contrary to the subject's nature. The discussion of things you can accomplish with a *charm person* spell provides a good basis for what a dominated subject can be made to do without getting a new saving throw.

Once a dominated subject receives an order, it tends to follow that order to the exclusion of all other activities (other than basic activities such as eating, drinking, and sleeping) until it fulfills the order. If the DM decides the order is against the subject's nature, it gets only one saving throw to resist the order and throw off the spell, even if the order takes some time and effort to accomplish. As with the *suggestion* spell, it pays to be careful how you phrase orders. For example, if you order a subject to attack its ally, it almost certainly will get a saving throw to throw off the spell. The subject, however, can accomplish this order with a single action. If you repeat the order, the subject will get a new saving throw. On the other hand, if you order a subject to slay one of its allies, the subject will get only one saving throw.

Each day the spell lasts, you must spend 1 round concentrating on the subject to maintain your influence. If you don't do so, the spell doesn't necessarily end, but the subject gets a new saving throw to throw off the effect.

Dominate person affects only humanoids. The *dominate monster* spell works just like *dominate person* except that it works on any kind of creature (provided it is subject to mind-affecting spells).

In Conclusion

That wraps up our short look at enchantments.

About the Author

Skip Williams keeps busy with freelance projects for several different game companies and was the Sage of ***Dragon** Magazine* for many years. Skip is a co-designer of the **D&D** 3rd Edition game and the chief architect of the *Monster Manual*. When not devising swift and cruel deaths for player characters, Skip putters in his kitchen or garden (rabbits and deer are not Skip's friends) or works on repairing and improving the century-old farmhouse that he shares with his wife, Penny, and a growing menagerie of pets.

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